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AUTHOR Terry, John E.
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ABSTRACT

Population, economic, and technological changes will all affect the ways in which Canadian community colleges operate. The rise in the number of seniors, a slowing birth rate, and the aging of the "baby boomers" have influenced the demographics of college clientele. The dynamics of the global marketplace require a highly educated and skilled human resource pool. Rapid and dramatic changes in communications technology have permitted a shift of attention from "teaching" to "learning." In addition, the market share for colleges and universities has dwindled in the face of rising specialized education firms and corporate training. An essential strategy for surviving these challenges is to constantly monitor and project changes, both internal and external to an organization. Evolutionary change, which is natural, must be complemented with revolutionary change, in which the organizational structure is redesigned for greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving objectives. Other strategies for survival and success include the following: (1) being imaginative, innovative, and flexible when organizing where and when learning takes place; (2) identifying institutional strengths and building on them, rather than attempting to be all things to all people; (3) cooperating with would-be competitors in industry and other sectors of the educational system; and (4) cultivating a corporate culture that embodies a sense of mission, commitment, initiative, responsiveness, flexibility, entrepreneurship, and opportunism. (JMC)

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES -

COMPETING FOR CHANGING CLIENTELE

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COMMUNITY COLLEGES - COMPETING FOR CHANGING CLIENTELE

OPENING PARABLE

FABCO was a successful company specializing in fabricating steel structures: bridges, towers, buildings, like that. The company had established an enviable position in the industry and everyone was happy. One day the shop foreman came into the manager's office and reported that the men in the riveting shop were restless. "What's their problem?," asked the manager. "Well", the foreman replied, "they've seen the shop drawings for the new job we bid on and they've noted that all the joints are welded. There is no requirement for riveting. They feel threatened and they're talking about strike." The company had never had a strike; contentious issues were always resolved by appropriate standing committees. The matter was referred to the committee for Preservation Of Skill Trades (POST). After due consideration, the POST committee recommended that the company would only undertake contracts in which at least 20% of all joints called for riveting. Management accepted the POST recommendation and peace was restored. But business slumped and before long, the company faced the prospects of closure.

FABCO failed to do two things: first, it failed to recognize change in the marketplace; second, when it did recognize new trends in the industry, the company tried to insulate itself from change.

Moral: Every organization, including colleges, has to contend with change and, as we all know, the rate of change is accelerating.

It often happens that what is perceived as the problem is, in fact, the solution.

For example:

PROBLEM: students are spending too much time in **VIDEO** arcades; they are missing classes and not doing their homework.

SOLUTION: bring **VIDEO** into the classroom and create interesting "games" that are, in fact, learning experiences.

Similarly:

PROBLEM: we have to meet the challenge of **CHANGE.**

SOLUTION: **CHANGE!**

CHANGE

Let's examine some of the changes which influence the way colleges operate.

1. SOCIETY:

The February 1990 issue of **Training and Development Journal** carried an interview with **Dr. Ken Dychtwald**, a psychologist and gerontologist, and co-author of the best-seller, **AGE WAVE.** It documents the impact that the post-World War II baby boom has had on North American society and projects the continuing influence that this demographic cohort will have on all aspects of our culture, including education. Like "a pig moving through a python", the leading edge of the boomer group will soon be approaching 50, and marks the beginning of the Age Wave. **Dychtwald**

identifies three separate demographic currents which are converging to produce the Age Wave:

First, the "Senior Boom". One hundred years ago, only 4% of our North American population was over 65. Today, the over-65 group represents 12% of the population.

The second current is the "Birth-Dearth". Twice as many women of child-bearing age today, as in their parents' generation, are having only half as many children.

The third current is the middle-aging of the baby boom.

There are several consequences of these converging currents:

1. Attention will shift from youth to the middle-aged and seniors;
2. Advances in medical science will prolong life and it will be a healthier life;
3. People may never retire, or retire three or four times, each time going back to school to prepare for the next career;
4. People won't grow old at 65;
5. Older citizens will want to work and perhaps need to work;
6. Older workers are becoming more desirable and necessary.

Example: When **Warren Buffett**, Chairman of **Birkshire Hathaway**, was reminded that **Rose Blumkin**, Chairperson of one of his companies, **Furniture Mart**, had just turned 94,

he replied, "She is clearly gathering speed and may well reach her full potential in another five or ten years. Therefore, I've persuaded the Board to scrap our mandatory-retirement-at-100 policy!"

What does all this mean for colleges? It means that we can no longer think primarily of the 18-24 age cohort as our clientele. The clientele is changing.

So much for clientele who are individuals. Clientele also include a company or a group of companies.

The **Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)**, several years ago, recognized the need to establish strong linkages between colleges and industry as a means of improving the productivity of Canadian enterprises and increasing our competitiveness in world trade. **ACCC** introduced the **Spotlight Awards** to encourage and reward partnerships between colleges and private or public organizations for the purpose of education and training.

2. ECONOMY:

The term **"global economy"** is no longer trendy jargon, but a reality that is here and now, and significantly affects all sectors of our society, including education.

Jim Kinley, President of Lunenburg Industrial Foundry and Engineering, notes that the big challenge in the coming years for

his company is the **changes in the fishery.** "We have to go further afield" he said. "The main part of the business is still domestic but the growth area is international". **Jim Kinley**, like other progressive managers, recognizes the need to change.

We can no longer insulate ourselves from the dynamics of a global marketplace and survive in isolation. It is widely acknowledged that in order to maintain an acceptable standard of living and quality of life, **we must be competitive in the international marketplace, and in order to be competitive, our most important resource, our human resource, must be highly educated and skilled.**

The **Canadian Chamber of Commerce Education Task Force**, chaired by **Edward Stewart, Executive Vice-President for Corporate Affairs** at **Labatt Breweries of Canada**, notes that "the time has come for business to get serious about education and training". The Task Force urges the private sector to invest more in education and training, and calls for **closer linkages between private sector companies and education and training services.**

In a keynote address to the **National Forum of Science and Technology Advisory Councils,** held in Halifax, Nova Scotia in August 1989, **Dr. Fraser Mustard, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research**, made this point: "Canada is a small peripheral economy competing in an increasingly complex global system driven and changed by the merging of science and technology. --- We must make

a major switch from a resource-based economy to a knowledge-based economy (capable of producing tradeable goods and services), which is necessary to compete and maintain an appropriate share in the expanding global economy".

The three principal components of the economy can be represented by three wheels:

Wheel A - production of tradeable goods and services;

Wheel B - the service sector which directly supports Wheel A: finance, transportation, communications, legal services, etc.;

Wheel C - the service sector which affects quality of life: health, education, social services.

While education is included in Wheel C, it, of course, helps people to prepare themselves for roles in all three wheels.

And, while all three wheels are important, the pedals are on Wheel A, which drives the system's economic tricycle.

3. TECHNOLOGY:

Probably no other technology has demonstrated such rapid and dramatic advances as communication technology.

We can be particularly proud that Canadian enterprises, like **Northern Telecom**, are world leaders in this field. It should also be noted that **Northern Telecom's** commitment to education and

training, on a national scale, is an example for private sector enterprises to follow.

The wizardry of communication technology allows us now to shift our attention to "learning", as distinct from "teaching". In his book, **Teaching As A Subversive Activity, Dr. Neil Postman** draws an interesting relationship between teaching and learning: there can be learning without teaching, but there can't be teaching without learning, anymore than we can have selling without buying.

You haven't "sold" something unless someone has "bought" it. And similarly, you haven't "taught" something unless someone has "learned" it. Still, we sometimes find ourselves saying "I've taught my class that theory five times and they haven't learned it yet!"

Communication technology not only makes it possible to focus more on learning, as in the video arcade problem/solution example, but more importantly, the **changing clientele will demand it, and the press for cost-effectiveness will require it.**

In an address to the **Cape Breton Board of Trade** on April 11, 1990, **Gerald Pond, Chairman, Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce** and **Vice-President, Planning, New Brunswick Telephone Company**, cited a decision by the four Atlantic Provinces to extend the services of the **Isaac Walton Killam Hospital**, which specializes in the care of children, throughout the Atlantic Provinces by applying

the latest in communication technology. The technology can be used in education as well as in health.

4. COMPETITION:

The ever-increasing pursuit of excellence is accompanied by ever-intensifying competition - in all walks of life. **Colleges and universities no longer have a monopoly for their services.** The introduction of the **Canadian Jobs Strategy Program** in 1985 served as early warning. Competition is a reality between and among colleges and universities and also between colleges and the "new players" who have entered the field of education and training.

A publication of the Federal Department of Industry, Science and Technology gives an **Industry Profile of Commercial Education and Training** services in Canada.

The paper identifies four components of the "industry":

1. Firms that provide specialized education and training, including the production of manuals and training videos, curriculum design, train-the-trainer programs and assessment of training needs. These firms serve both domestic and international clients.
2. Private schools that are licensed and provide training in business and industrial skills. Of the 900 such institutions in Canada, more than 75% actually conduct training while the remainder are correspondence schools.

Total enrollment in these schools is about 200,000 a year. Some of these schools are highly specialized like the **Petroleum Industry Training Service (PITS)**, in Edmonton, Alberta.

3. The third component consists of business and professional services firms who include a training package with the sale of their product or service. Telephone companies, computer manufacturers, industrial equipment suppliers are examples.

4. The fourth component is the traditional colleges and universities which provide training and education to special clients on a commercial basis. The clients may be domestic or international, the latter being served primarily through agencies like the **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)** in collaboration with non-Government organizations, such as the **Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC).**

The budgets of some international financial institutions (I.F.I.'s) that support such services reflect the scope of the market opportunity for Canadian colleges. In 1987, the World Bank contributed more than U.S. $450 Million to educational programs in developing countries, and, in the same year, the Asian Development Bank contributed more than U.S. $100 Million to similar projects. Canada contributes about 4.5% of total international financial institutions' budgets and receives about 2% of the contracts awarded by these organizations. **We need to be more aggressive to improve our market share.**

STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS:

1. CHANGE:

An essential strategy is to constantly monitor and project changes, both internal and external to the organization. At the same time there should be a compelling urge to make changes in the organization to better take advantage of the changes that are occurring, to profit from the changes rather than be victim of them. It is equally important to recognize that change is a continuing process and not something that happens once in a while.

2. ORGANIZATION:

Institutional organization is designed to facilitate achievement of the institution's objectives. There are two kinds of organizational change. One occurs because people in the organization change: people get older, their interests change, some leave the organization, new ones join. These are **evolutionary changes.** The more difficult change, which requires careful management, is **revolutionary change**, where the organizational structure is redesigned for better efficiency and effectiveness in achieving objectives. A word of caution:

> "We trained hard... but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form into teams we would be reorganized... I was to learn later that we tend to meet any situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization."
>
> Petronius Arbiter, 1910 BC

3. METHODOLOGY:

We have already noted the ability, because of communication technology, and the necessity, because of changing clientele, to shift our emphasis from teaching to learning, and thereby enhance the teaching-learning process. **Methodology, however, implies more than "how" we assist learning. It includes organizing "where" and "when" learning takes place and this calls for imagination, innovation and above all, flexibility.** The overriding criterion is customer service, that is to say, we deliver to suit the convenience and satisfaction of the client.

The **Conference Board of Canada** presented the first National Conference on Business-Education Partnerships in Toronto, April 17 and 18, 1990. The theme for the Conference was **"Reaching For Success"** and focused on business and education working together. One of the presentations had to do with a partnership between **Cabot Institute of Applied Arts and Technology**, St. John's, Newfoundland, and the **Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOCC)**, Labrador City, in which an instructor from **Cabot** provided specialized training for industrial electricians at **IOCC** and an electrician from **IOCC** replaced the instructor at **Cabot**. An interesting aspect of the partnership is that **IOCC** "shopped around" for this specialized training and selected **Cabot** as the institution that could meet their criteria which included:

- delivering the training on-site
- providing a custom-designed vs, a packaged program
- providing flexibility in delivery-time based on

production schedule and the resultant availability of trainees; and

- consistent with the company's mission statement, to be training of high quality and competitive price.

Here is an example of imagination, innovation and flexibility:

Harry Marsh runs the **Commercial Safety College**, a small, private training institution, at Masstown, just outside Truro, Nova Scotia. **Commercial Safety College** specializes in training operators of commercial vehicles and heavy industrial equipment: buses, tractor-trailers, graders, bulldozers, cranes, etc.

Commercial Safety College wanted to put on a training program for tractor-trailer drivers. The problem: time is money and the drivers needed to spend their time behind the wheel on the highway, not in a classroom. Solution: the College conducted the program on the ferry between Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and Bar Harbour, Maine, a six-hour crossing, during which time they had a "captive class"!

4. SELECTIVITY:

In a recent address to the **Nova Scotia Council of Applied Science and Technology (CAST)**, **Timothy Tuff, President of Alcan, U.S.A.**, made the point that an institution, be it a manufacturing company or a provincial government, should identify its strengths

and build on them. Similarly, a college should be selective in identifying those strengths in which it can achieve excellence and not try to be "all things to all people".

5. COOPERATION:

We referred earlier to competition. Competition does not preclude cooperation. In fact, some interesting alliances have been struck between would-be competitors: Ford and Mazda, General Motors and Suzuki, General Motors and Nissan, Chrysler and Mitsubishi. Indeed, it is because we should nurture selected strengths that we should seek to collaborate with institutions that have other strengths so that together we can satisfy a client's needs that neither could separately.

Cooperation is needed, not only between colleges, but also between the various sectors of our education system.

Dr. James Downey, President of the University of New Brunswick, makes this point beautifully in an article in the April 1989 issue of **University Affairs**:

> "Our present education system is an archipelago, with universities constituting one island, high schools another, primary and elementary schools another, and community colleges yet another. The ferry service between these islands is infrequent and unpredictable. What we shall need for the 21st century, if we are to meet the challenges of the "knowledge society" and combat

the scourge of illiteracy, is a series of fixed links between the islands in order to mobilize and coordinate all of our considerable educational resources in the interest of the people and the society we serve."

If you can't beat them, get them to join you!

6. CORPORATE CULTURE:

A college should endeavour to cultivate a corporate culture that embodies the following characteristics:

1. Sense of mission: the mission should be clearly stated and understood by all;
2. Commitment: everyone should be committed to achieving the institutional goals;
3. Initiative: the institution must proactively market its services;
4. Responsiveness: the ability to respond quickly to clients' needs;
5. Flexibility: internal processes too often inhibit the ability to act. While organizational structures are important, it is sometimes necessary to function in spite of them;
6. Liaison: developing and maintaining external linkages with "influential players". Probably no other strategy is more important than this. The essence of it is to maximize support and minimize opposition. "The time to make friends is before you need them".

7. Entrepreneurship: the courage to take calculated risks, the willingness to accept failure, the drive to make **PROFIT**.

8. Opportunism: Being constantly alert to grasp opportunity when it appears.

   Three British Columbia Community Colleges (**CARIBOO** at Kamloops, **OKANAGAN** at Kelowna and **MALASPINA** at Nanaimo) have been selected to develop full university degree programs at their campuses through partnerships between the colleges and Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, the University of British Columbia and the Open University. It is an extraordinary opportunity to develop and deliver programs that these colleges could not otherwise.

There's an old Latin saying:

"FRONTE CAPILATA, POST EST OCCASIO CALVA"

which literally means: Opportunity has a lock on his forehead, but is bald at the back. The inference is that we must seize opportunity when it approaches; once it passes there is nothing by which to grab it. From which we get the English adage: "Grasp time by the forelock". We wish the B. C. colleges every success as they meet these new challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It would be remiss not to recognize that this conference is being held at an institution which pioneered innovation in the teaching-learning process. From its very beginning, in 1969,

Holland College adopted a commitment to individualized learning. **Self Teaching and Evaluation Process (STEP)** became a hallmark of Holland College, and while **Dr. Donald Glendenning**, the founding President, might be envied for the opportunity he had to take this **"STEP"** when the College was established, he must also be congratulated and admired for his courage and persistence in making it happen.

SUMMATION

The key words of this paper are: CLIENTELE, COMPETITION and CHANGE. The most important of these is CHANGE.

CLOSING PARABLE

FABCO realized that it could not survive unless it changed and change it did. **POST**, the committee for Preservation Of Skill Trades, was replaced by **POMS**, the committee for Preservation Of Market Share. POMS recommended that:

1. the riveting shop be phased out;
2. the employees in the riveting shop be given the option of:
    a) being retrained in other skills or,
    b) accepting an attractive severance package.

The company recovered, regained its competitive position in the industry and they all lived happily ever after!

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